



**TRIBUTE TO GENE EUGENE**  
DOWN THE LINE MAGAZINE  
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# DOWN THE LINE

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## VISION:

Down the Line covers bands that explored the intersection between faith and art in the 1980s through the early 1990s - even though they were probably never accepted in to what is called "Contemporary Christian Music" because they were too edgy or alternative or liberal or for whatever reason. Some of these bands may still be making music today, and others may have moved on. We cover these bands (active or dormant) as well as any new projects by former members of these bands and any new bands that may have the same spirit as these bands.

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(there would be a whole lot more technical mumbo jumbo in this space if we were more professional. But that would be boring and all...)

# GENE EUGENE

by STEVE RUFF

Gene Eugene... I was never fortunate enough to see him live. I never saw The Lost Dogs when Gene was with them, nor was I ever able to see Adam Again play live. Nevertheless, Gene had an incredible impact on my life through his music, through his frailty and brokenness, and through the countless albums that he worked on. I have scoured the internet looking for a list of everything Gene worked on but I couldn't find anything comprehensive. I did find an old article that said he worked on over 300 projects, I somehow bet it was more than that. His impact was far and wide, and the music that he engineered, produced and wrote is still some of the most definitive in Christian music. Gene was a music machine. He lived in his Green Room Studio and according to everyone that I have talked to, he was always there working on something for someone.

When Matt and I started Down The Line, I knew several people who I wanted to feature in our pages. Gene was one of the first. It was difficult to figure out what to do... how to write a story and article on someone that I never knew, but someone that I knew was so dear to so many. I figured the best thing was to get contributions from as many of his friends as I could. Then came the task of trying to get in touch with a lot of musicians, and Lord knows they all carry extremely busy schedules. This story has been months in the making and the more I gathered the info, the more I thought about Gene. His Mom, Carole, has been extremely generous with me, sending me photos and sharing stories. I am grateful to her for all her help, and to top it off she also trusted me with the original photos from her scrapbook. She mailed them to me and we got them in digital format here on our end. It felt like such a precarious place to be, asking Carole about her son, asking Gene's friends about him. It is never easy to deal with the death of a loved one, but I felt like an

insider digging into a sensitive area. So I offer my many thanks to everyone who helped me in this story. Thanks for letting me, a fan, learn more about Gene and who he was. I hope that you, the reader, will be inspired as well.

Gene was born on April 6, 1961 in Fort Frances, Ontario, Canada. He was the oldest of four children. Lisa, Gene's sister, was born the following year on April 22, 1962. Jana Lyn was born the third child, but due to a very difficult pregnancy, she didn't survive and never came out of the incubator. In 1968 Gene's parents started adoption proceedings and they became parents to Todd in 1969. Todd was 8 years younger than Gene, and as Carole put it, "attached to Gene's coattails." Unfortunately, Todd passed away in 2004, and Lisa is the only surviving sibling. In talking with Carole she told me that Gene was Todd's mentor, and that the three siblings had a very close relationship. Carole said, "Gene would lock his bedroom door at times just to get a break from his brother... but for the most part, he loved him dearly and put up with his tagging along. When they became adults they were the best of friends, and Todd never got over Gene's death. We all mourn in different ways, but I have never seen anyone as lost as Todd after Gene's passing."

As most know, Gene was a child actor, and had numerous roles in several TV shows, maybe most famous was the *Bewitched* episode in which he played a young Darren. Gene also starred in plays, one in which he was the son of Steve Martin. He was a good student, a boy scout and even the valedictorian of his high school class, but it was music that would become his passion and his career.

There was something about the chemistry in Adam Again. I remember the first time I heard their music (it was the *Homeboys* album) and it was so eclectic that I

# GENE "EUGENE" ANDRUSCO:

didn't even know what to think at first. It was so diverse... an amalgamation of pop, funk, soul, R&B and rock fused together in this blend that was unlike anything else that I had ever heard. The thing that drew me in was Gene's lyrics. They were honest and intense, and for Christian music they were refreshing. There was a camaraderie in his lyrics, between races, between his friends. His songs were socially relevant as well as politically tinged, and he talked about things that you didn't typically hear in Christian music (just check out his cover of "Inner City Blues"). His lyrics hit a depth that is not easy to dig to. Songs like "Bad News on the Radio" could really put the listener in the place where they felt what he was singing about. Gene was an artist, and had the ability to vocalize a scenario in ways that not many can. I still cry when I hear "Relapse," and thankfully I was able to ask Greg Lawless about that song which is my favorite

Adam Again tune.

As I stated earlier it is difficult to write about those people that we have admired who have gone on before us. It is easy to put people on a pedestal when we don't know them and only see them in part, typically only the part they want us to see. This is not an attempt to make Gene seem like someone that was perfect... he wasn't. Carole sent me an email one day that said, "One concern about your article is that I want Gene to look like the human being he was. He wasn't a saint and he certainly made mistakes. One of the things that was mentioned at his funeral is that he would always borrow money from his band members and never pay it back. We are talking about huge amounts, but it was a standard joke, he never seemed to have any money in his pocket at any one time. Gene was witty and funny, but very human and like all of us had his bad sides. Just be careful and make him look real."

So, this is not an attempt to "canonize" Gene. I think his struggles were clear in many of his songs, he sang about them, and you can hear the searching in his voice. This is just an attempt at remembrance, a small way of trying to say thanks to the artist that Gene was.

In writing this story I asked for help, contributions from some of Gene's dearest friends, family and band mates. Below are the responses, how Gene will be remembered by those who knew him best, and by those of us who were touched by his music. Not everyone that was contacted for the article was able to respond by the deadline. It isn't easy to get in touch with some folks, and I regret that I wasn't able to get Derri Daughtery of The Lost Dogs in here. Even so, the list below were people that I thought knew Gene very well, had worked with him for a long time, and I am grateful that they all helped out and were so gracious with me.



**Dec 31, 1986: Adam Again live with Glenn Holland (4-4-1) on keyboards**

# HIS FRIENDS AND FAMILY REMEMBER

Michael Knott (L.S.U., Struck Last May)

**1) When/how did you first meet Gene?**

When he asked me at a gig why I had signed Sincerely Paul.

**2) What projects were you involved in with him?**

Too many to count.

**3) How do you think Gene impacted the music scene?**

He knew how to record and bring the life from his subjects.

**4) Three words you would use to describe Gene?**

"That's pretty good"... what he meant was "that's amazing!"

When I interviewed Michael back in 2007 for a Struck Last May article, I had asked him, "Any fond words and memories of Gene Eugene?" His response was, "A wonderful, loving person. Extremely talented, extremely helpful in my musical recording career, and I'm just sad he's gone."



Gene Eugene live, provided by Todd Zeller

Jon Knox (Adam Again)

**1) When/how did you first meet Gene?**

I met Gene when I answered an ad in the *Recycler* magazine in the Chino/Pomona area. The ad read "6 piece dance type band needs a drummer". I auditioned with several other guys. I thought the audition went well, but I found out later that Gene did not like me at first and tried to get some other guy to play. They kept calling this other guy but he never returned Gene's calls. So, he called me and told me I got the gig. We started rehearsing and touring in Canada a month later. It was the beginning of a beautiful musical relationship.

**2) What projects were you involved in with Gene?**

Adam Again, Riki Michele, Lost Dogs, Crystal Lewis, Deliverance, Freedom of Soul, Dynamic Twins, Soldiers for Christ and others.

**3) How do you think Gene shaped/impacted the music scene?**

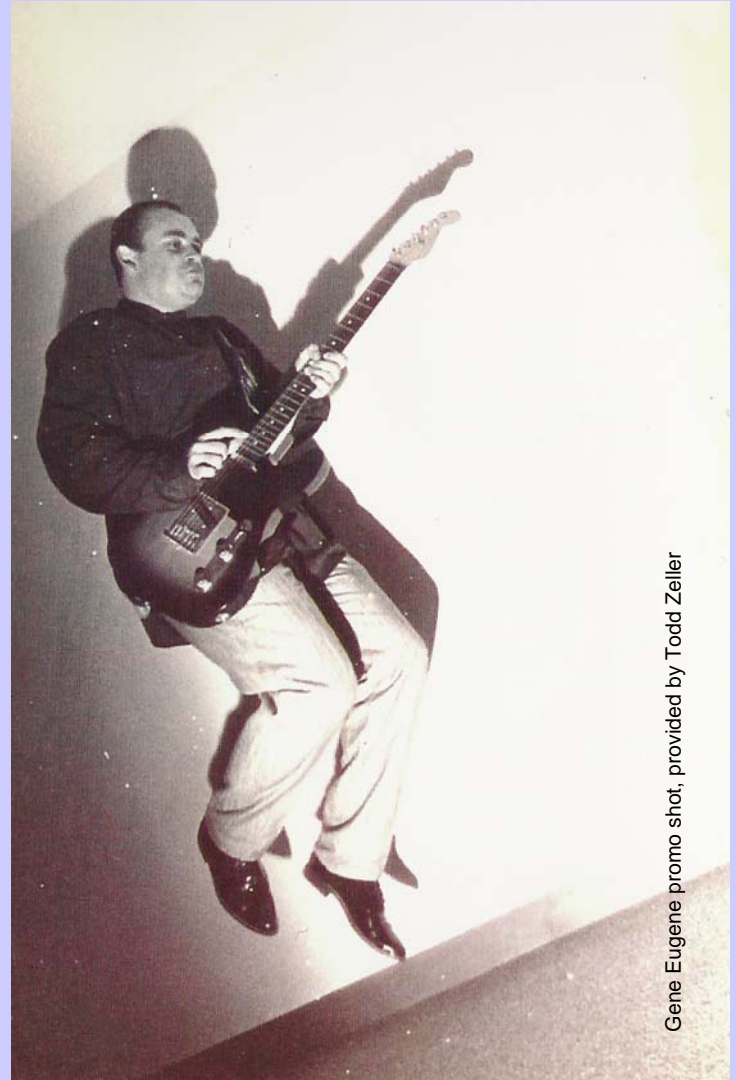
Gene always had a keen sense and an inspired creativity. He just knew how to bring out the best in any artist he was working with.

**4) Three words you would use to describe Gene?**

Passionate, creative and inspirational

**5) As a friend of yours, how did Gene influence you?**

Gene taught me how to release and take in the moment.



Gene Eugene promo shot, provided by Todd Zeller

**1) When/how did you first meet Gene?**

The Choir was playing a show in Southern California along with some of our other So Cal friends in the early 1980's. Gene was mixing for Undercover that night. I remember seeing him running around dealing with the sound and helping them get set up. He was easy to notice and remember. Gene had a distinct charisma and an interesting look. I was curious about who he was and what he was all about from even a casual connection that evening.

**2) What projects were you involved in with him?**

Adam Again of course. Nearly all of their records and live shows. Great memories of touring with them in the US and overseas. Gene had me play sax or lyricon on a project here and there, but it was Adam Again primarily.

**3) How do you think Gene shaped/impacted the music scene?**

I think that he inspired creativity and brought out energy and passion among established talent like The Choir, Mike Knott, Terry Taylor, Mike Roe, Undercover and many others. He recognized talent in unknown and emerging artists too, helped them find their place creatively and gave them a platform commercially. Gene's confidence, creative genius and infectious personality brought out the best in both.

**4) Three words you would use to describe Gene and why?**

Hidden... I don't think that any one person knew the whole Gene. He revealed what he wanted to each person, no matter how close they were to him. While he could appear very casual and transparent, I believe he was a very complex soul with many sides to him.

Funny... He always made me laugh and I was so pleased when I could make him laugh. It could be a peculiar, humorous perspective, an elaborate practical joke, stressful circumstances that he had the ability to lighten or plain gooberish nonsense... I remember laughing a lot with him.

Awesome... I know that might sound a bit pedestrian at first, but I was, and do, remain in awe of him. His voice was beautiful, his lyrics profound, his friendship genuine and his soul deep.

**5) As a friend of yours how did Gene influence you?**

He taught me that I can always try again, even after failing many times. He made me feel like I was better than I believed I was. He shamed me when I was shallow, and I cared to change myself for the better because I loved and respected him. I depended on him for so much. To have him as a friend, company when I was lonely and help when I needed a hand is something that I am still grateful for.



Glenn Holland and Gene in Neverland Studios tracking bass circa Spring '88.

Photo courtesy of Glenn Holland

**1) When/how did you first meet Gene?**

I probably met Gene sometime in '85. Our debut album had done well and our record label - in the form of one guy, Harry Barnes - was looking to expand on his initial success with us. Harry gave me a tape of some mixes of this band, Adam Again, that he was working with. I found them fascinating, and thankfully, so totally different from anything else in Christian music. I recall my first impression was lots of Talking Heads flavor, and Gene and Michele's vocals reminded me of John Doe and Exene. I soon learned Gene couldn't be categorized. I can't remember the exact setting where I met Gene, but he instantly came off as someone different. He was a bit different or shy at first, but once I got to know him (he didn't have much choice), I liked him a lot. He was one of those guys that always had something going on and a story to tell.

**2) What projects were you involved in with him?**

I was so intrigued by what he was doing that I pestered him to play keyboards with Adam Again for a stretch in '86/'87 I believe it was. The Blue Collar bands (Undercover, Adam Again, 4-4-1) did both Icthus and Cornerstone in '86. Adam Again had a choice slot in the evening one night and totally rocked the place. I still remember Gene, with like 10,000 people in front of him, asking if anyone knew if the Dodgers had one that day. Nuts.

So, after that I did a few smaller gigs with them and then we shared a stage at Cornerstone. It was a lot of fun to go back-to-back with sets by 4-4-1 and Adam Again. Sometime later Gene then (wisely) got a real keyboard player. I was grateful for the experience.

Once Harry had us, Undercover and Adam Again in the Blue Collar stable and national distribution, he needed help in promotion and marketing. Gene and I worked at Harry's house in Monterey Park, CA most weekdays getting the word out to radio stations, sending singles, etc. Once again, a lot of fun and a lot of laughing. Our little room at Harry's house had one piece of art on the wall, which was Howard Finster's painting he did for Adam Again's first album cover.

By '88 Blue Collar was no more and neither was 4-4-1. Joe and Gene had started to revive Broken Records, and I was still very much into continuing music. John McNamara (4-4-1 singer) and I talked with Joe and Gene about doing a record with them, and they urged us to use the 4-4-1 name which the other guys graciously agreed to. I knew I wanted Gene to produce the record with me, so we spent a good part of 1988 together working on that project, plus things like helping Joe's solo record and other stuff. After we wrapped the record, I also went to work for Broken on promotions.

There's nothing like all-nighters in a studio to get to know someone, and Gene and I had some great times. We interspersed all the work with road trips for things we both liked - Vegas, horse racing and Dodger games. Gene was always on the edge financially, but he knew how to have a good time.

**3) How do you think Gene shaped/impacted the music scene?**

I don't pretend to be an expert on the music scene. From what I saw, his style was so different from anything that was going on and he did what he did so well that it must have had a dramatic impact on a lot of people's perceptions and directions. I know it did me. He was an extremely inventive, creative and charismatic person, and people wanted to be near that. He should have been impacting many more people than he did, but I'm pretty sure you'll find out he ended up cutting a pretty wide swath.

**4) Three words you would use to describe Gene?**

Most people can't be reduced to three words, most of all Gene. I had some tremendous fun with him - laughing so hard I thought I was going to pee. Gene was no saint and he could make you pretty mad with his schedule, if it can be called that, and his unique version of the truth sometimes. He was the flawed genius who died young.

**5) As a friend of yours, how did Gene influence you?**

The first thing Gene did to me when I met him was quickly realize how little talent I had. For me he underscored just how special making music was. I wanted him to be as successful as possible, and even volunteered to manage Adam Again for a while, but that went nowhere for a few reasons. That was my reaction to what he had to offer the world. That, and try to be as close to what he had going on as possible.

He definitely had the charisma that you did want to hang out with Gene. Sometimes you couldn't tell if Gene was trying to be cool, or if he was. He was also a misfit in a genre full of misfits. I remember after Randy Ziegler left Calvary Costa Mesa I tried to get Adam Again on stage there. It was still the place to play and we were pretty entrenched there, so I tried to use some of that influence to get them a gig. The guy running it told me "I don't see the salt bro", meaning, I surmised, Adam Again didn't have enough trite Jesus lingo in their lyrics to pass the litmus test. At that point it was just icing on the cake for me and a lot of people who felt boxed in and blocked out of the Christian establishment. Of course Gene was never going to fit within some sort of Christian establishment, so he created his own world and people came to that place and it influenced people.

So, now guys like Switchfoot and Reliant K and the host of other Christian Alt bands can really thrive and it's because guys like Gene set a bar 20 years ago for everyone to leap for.

Gene and I both divorced around the same time and lost contact. I got very busy with getting my life on solid footing and wasn't involved with music much. So, I didn't hear about Gene's death until quite awhile afterwards. That's always bothered me, but it's likely me just feeling sorry for myself that I didn't get to say goodbye or reminisce with others. I do wish I had stayed in contact and had a few more good times with Gene.

I think the best lesson to take from Gene's life is that he epitomized the phrase "God-given talent", and by showing that talent in the fractured and dysfunctional world of Christian popular music made people make a choice between what artists are expected to do with that talent by humans versus dealing with why God has really given that talent in the first place.

Who can listen to "Who Can Hold Us" and say that Gene's art doesn't have salt, brothers?



Adam Again promo shot, provided by Todd Zeller

Michael Pritzl (The Violet Burning)

### 1) When/how did you first meet Gene?

I first met Gene when The Violet Burning opened for Adam Again in Ontario, CA. But, we didn't really start becoming friends until years later, after the Adam Again "Dig" recording, which had become a favorite of ours to listen to while on tour. Gosh, what a wonderful recording 'Dig' is.

### 2) What projects were you involved in with him?

Gene recorded demos for us before our self-titled release. They became known as the 'Lillian Gish' demos. Basically Gene and Anna (his friend and business partner at the Green Room) offered us some free time to come in after hours to the Green Room studios in Huntington Beach, CA.

During that time Gene and I became closer friends and he began to help mentor me as a songwriter. Up until that time I really didn't have someone in my life who was a good songwriter that could help to teach me about songs, structure and lyrics, and also to guide me towards other great songwriters and lyricists. It was those Demos with Gene that led to the offers we had from Major and Independent Labels at that time.

### 3) How do you think Gene shaped/impacted the music scene?

Well, the truth of it, is that there weren't too many good recording studios in Orange County at the time, and certainly not many studios with Gene's outstanding ability for recording and mixing. Gene's partner, Anna, had really turned the Green Room into a wonderful, vibey place to hang out and be creative or to simply come and hang out. Gene was a partner in the Brainstorm Artists recording label with Joe Taylor (Undercover), and Brainstorm brought a lot of projects from that label through the Green Room. And then as Brandon Ebel started releasing recordings with Tooth and Nail, he brought a lot of work to the Green Room as well.

In many ways the Green Room had all of these different musical branches coming into it. Gene and Anna were sort of the filters that everything came through including all of those Brainstorm Artist bands, the Tooth and Nail bands and The Violet Burning, which fell alongside a couple other bands that were pursuing and pioneering Mainstream recording contracts in the mid 90s.

### 4) Eight words that you would use to describe Gene and why?

"Stevie Wonder: Songs in the Key of Life"

This was his favorite recording, he would listen to it for hours over and over. He loved the vibe, the feeling, the skills of the musicians. I think this translated into his own music and the music of Adam Again. Gene was a wonderful guitar player and piano player. He could play the Rhodes as good as anyone I had ever heard, and his lyrics and voice conveyed the sweet brokenness of his soul.



Brian Doidge (L.S.Underground)

**1) How did you first meet Gene?**

I first met Gene at the Green Room. We had gone over there to do some recording, pre-Aunt Bettys stuff, he was the engineer and I knew he was in Adam Again. Yeah, I just met him through Michael (Knott) and recording at the Green Room.

**2) What projects did you work with him on?**

Aunt Betty's, The Lifesavers "Huntington Beach" and Knott's solo project "Rocket & A Bomb". I remember working on "Rocket & A Bomb" Gene was laying down some piano, I was playing guitar, we were all there just recording. He was kind of quiet, really nice, he was a cool cat ya know, he could really play.

**3) How do you think Gene impacted the music scene?**

I'm not all that familiar with Adam Again's music, but I know he was a good player, so I know that whatever he did it was good. I remember going into the studio, Gene was playing piano... I don't think that was even his main instrument, but it was really good, I was impressed by him as a musician.

**4) Three words to describe Gene?**

Quiet, humble and talented. Ya know sometimes people just have that kind of spirit, he was mellow, just easy to hang out with. There was no pressure, he was just a musician, and he opened his house to us. We didn't always treat it with respect, we were messing it up, but he even let me stay there for a couple of weeks in one of the back bedrooms when I was between places and that was really cool, so he was generous as well.

**5) How did Gene influence you?**

Ya know, you always like those people who come off humble, you like that kind of musician. They know they're good, but they're not trying to push it on anybody. I just remember that quiet spirit and a good musician.

Jason Martin (SF59, The Brothers Martin)

**1) When/how did you first meet Gene?**

I first met Gene when we were tracking our first album in '93 at the Green Room. I had seen Adam Again a few times before that, but never had talked to him. He would come in here and there to listen to stuff... I just thought he was some old guy that didn't know what we were doing... Looking back I was the guy that didn't know what we were doing! I think he was 31 or 32 at the time.. real old :)

**2) What projects were you involved in with him?**

He recorded, mixed and produced our 3rd, 4th, and 5th albums.

**3) How do you think Gene shaped and impacted the music scene?**

I think he influenced a lot of the early Christian music scene, definitely influenced me... I do a lot of recording and mixing these days, and I think of Gene every time I am doing it... I learned a lot from him, not just about how to mic drums, (I did that too) but how to work with people and make them feel comfortable. Gene was a big picture guy when it came to making records, he had a way of controlling the project so as to not get bogged down with the little things...if some part wasn't happening he would just say lets move on and we'll fix it later...most of the time we never did, but he usually had a way of knowing what parts were gonna work before you killed yourself playing or singing them a million times.

**4) Three words that you would use to describe Gene**

I don't know 3 words that would describe him exactly, but he was who he was and there was no one else like him.

**5) As a friend of yours, how did Gene influence you?**

I probably answered most of that in question 3....The whole way I look at making music has been influenced by Gene, he was a good friend and I miss him.

**1) When/how did you first meet Gene?**

Since I wasn't living in Southern California when I first heard of Adam Again, I "met" Gene as a fan. In early 1992, I was playing with Farewell to Juliet. Our thing was to only play original material, or covers from stuff we loved in the Christian alternative music scene. We played tons of Choir songs; probably a different one every show. We also played Swirling Eddies, Chagall Guevara, LSU, Dave Perkins, King's X, Over the Rhine and more. But our number two band beyond the Choir was Adam Again.

Jeff Schmale, our drummer, had a copy of *Homeboys*. We played the title track a lot, and it was probably the only reason I needed my wah-wah pedal until we wrote "Blindness" for our first CD. That was definitely informed by Adam Again. *Dig* came out that summer, and I remember FTJ covering "Deep," "It Is (What it Is)," and "Walk Between the Raindrops." I got the CD at the Cornerstone festival that summer when I saw the band for the first time. They were the total package; I loved everything about what every individual brought to the band, and they became one of my biggest favorites ever. It's a universal crime to me that we never got album number six, when it finally seemed like Gene was ramping up to work on it – "Guadalupe," or whatever it would have been. I still have the clipping from the Diamante distribution catalog announcing the album, for which Gene had never recorded a note. Whatever was prepared was all in his head when he left us.

**2) What projects were you involved in with him?**

I had moved to Los Angeles by late 1993 and was playing with Sunny Day Roses. The first time I recorded with Gene at the Green Room was when I was helping out Christopher Scott from Blackball and Precious Death. We went in to record some horns for the Blackball album *Hope*. I remember thinking that it had been a dream of mine to record with Gene, and when I finally did, it was playing bits parts on my euphonium from junior high. It was fun, though.

I was listening to lots of Gene's production, and always respected his ears and recording technique. It was eye-opening to see how casually he operated in the studio. I was just beginning to do production work, and I was super meticulous. Gene's theme seemed to be, "if it sounds right, it is right." Of course, he had tons of experience that helped make it look so easy, but since then I've learned to be more focused on the music itself and less hung up on studio details. I've still got that admiration for his ears. He was a great, intuitive mix engineer.

The second time Chris and I went to the Green Room, I was going to record some rhythm guitar for a new Precious Death project. I figured that would be great, hanging around with Gene and playing guitar. I remember telling him about Farewell to Juliet, and that we covered a few of his Adam Again songs. He asked me to play *Homeboys* for him, which made me really nervous, but I showed him. He laughed and told me I was making it way too hard. He showed it to me, and I swear it looked like his way took maybe two fingers. I had been combining parts. Anyhow, after that I thought we were going to settle into the recording. Gene got up, and said, "Well, Jeff, you know how to run all this stuff." Then he left and went to see a Dodgers game, and we didn't see him the rest of the night.

Somewhere in the middle of all of this time, I started assisting at shows as an instrument tech, and that included a couple of Cornerstone Festival dates for Adam Again. I loved being right in the middle of that sound. At the *Perfecta* gig, Gene had a bunch of trouble with his monitor next to the B3, and it was really getting his goat. He couldn't get the sound crew's attention, so he bellowed at me to come out, and he ducked down where people couldn't see how frustrated he was, yelling for me to fix something. The stage volume was deafening, and I couldn't hear a word he said. He was making gestures toward the monitor, though, so I got it swapped out and the show went on. After the song, some guy in the crowd yelled, "Thank your roadie!" Gene half-heartedly obliged on mike, muttering, "Thank you, Jeff." The poor dude just wanted to put on a show without having to hassle with gear problems. And I wanted to hear as much Adam Again as possible, so I was motivated to help get things working.

Back home, I helped The Lost Dogs a few times, too. My favorite show was one they played at the Whisky-a-Go-Go. I remember Gene's flag shirt and white cowboy hat, which always seemed like a funny image to me. I imagined Marvin Gaye dressing up like Garth Brooks. And I remember duct-taping Elvis sideburns to Mike Roe's face for the encore of "Close But No Cigar" at that show. I still love the Dogs, but like anybody who saw them then thinks, it was so great with all four of them together.

In fall of 1997, I was working on the second Farewell to Juliet disc. Greg Lawless traveled south from his home to work with Gene at the Green Room, and my understanding was always that they were kicking around Adam Again ideas. Greg came to Mirolab studio in Long Beach, and I played him a song called "Ever Be." I had recorded a guide track where I deliberately tried to play like one of his Adam Again solos, and I wanted him to do the real thing. Greg told me that I'd already done the part justice and that I should keep it. So, he recorded a great snarly one for our song "731." To this day, I think we had a synch problem between Logic Audio and our clunky old ADATs that makes Greg sound late; I'm positive it's not his fault. You should have heard the volume while he was playing. It would have melted your face to be in the room with the amp. So, we got to hear that part the way it was meant to be heard once, in real time.

I played on one full album with Gene, kind of as a stroke of dumb luck, really. Mike Knott was making an LSU album, and Brian Doidge had moved away from California. At that time, I was a regular crew member for the Aunt Bettys, so I heard about the recording while setting up for a gig in Hollywood. I told Mike that I'd loved those LSU albums, and that if I could play a triangle or one xylophone note on a song, I'd be thrilled. He told me to bring whatever gear I had to the studio the very next day. After work, I plowed through Orange County traffic and brought my amp and my pedal board, my good guitar along with my hunk of junk bass, just in case. Knott asked what I had, and all he cared about was the hunk of junk bass. I played the....

whole *Dogfish Jones* album in about five hours, plugged straight into the desk, having never heard a note of it. I do like that record, but the bass playing is definitely nothing to brag about. That was the event that made me realize the world was full of guitar players, but bassists could generally get a gig. I've been probably more of a bassist than a guitarist since then. Anyhow, the two things that make *Dogfish Jones* really cool are Knott's story and Gene's weird B-movie organ playing. Gene's playing on that has tons of character, and it was probably entirely off the cuff. You can't go wrong with Chuck Cummings on drums or Andy Carter on guitar, either.

I visited the Green Room while Mike was tracking vocals, and started seeing Gene a little more while I was helping to assemble the *Ford Supersonic* album for Aunt Bettys. I had volunteered to intern for Gene, which was probably an offer he got two dozen times a week. On one visit, Gene said he was going to give me a call to run the board for him while he worked on vocals for the Adam Again record. I tried to play it cool, but was, of course, stoked beyond words. Now, I'm pretty sure he was just yanking my chain. The guys in The Lost Dogs seemed to love winding people up like that.

### **3) How do you think Gene shaped and impacted the music scene?**

That's a question that doesn't have a short answer. Adam Again were pioneers in Christian alternative music's early days. They brought funk and soul into a genre that still doesn't have much of it – and I'd love to hear any band anywhere that's as good as the final lineup with Jon, Paul, Greg, Gene and Michele. Gene's lyrics grew more painfully honest with each record, to a degree that I think should be held as an example for any songwriter of substance in any market. Those last three records are like an open wound that gets wider and deeper. They're full of pain, but they also reach out to people to let them know that others have experienced hard times and survived. And maybe even found beauty in the middle of it.

Of course, Gene impacted the music scene in very practical, hands-on ways every day at the Green Room. He recorded young bands, and taught them the ropes of song arrangement. He undercharged a lot of them to get them on their way. He brought fresh perspective and altered the sounds of veteran bands, too. I especially love the later albums he did with Starflyer 59. I hope Jason is interviewed for this story, because I'm sure he'd have great things to say about how Gene helped augment his vision.

I think Gene's biggest influence on me was in the behind the scenes roles, recording, mixing, and helping younger bands reach a new level. I've been engineering for a long time now, and Gene looms large in my interest (along with another guy named Mark Rubel from Champaign, IL, who shepherded the Farewell to Juliet records). I remember once thinking that I'd try to get every record that Gene played on or produced. I soon realized I'd go broke trying to achieve that goal. He touched years worth of music.

### **4) Three words that you would use to describe Gene, and why?**

Frank: Things like "River on Fire" and "Stone" could not have been easy things to write, let alone sing in public. But those lyrics transcend style. They're timeless, and will hit anyone who hears them square in the gut.

What's a word for doing what you're meant to do? In Gene, I saw somebody who essentially lived in a recording studio, and saw as many ball games and as much of his friends as he could. I also saw someone whose whole life seemed to pour through his songs. To someone with a grinding day job, it looked like freedom. I'm not naïve enough to think that Gene didn't feel worn to a nub by his workload, and I think he carried a lot of sadness. But I think if you can get away with it, it's a good thing to do what you're passionate about. It seems to me that's what Gene did.

Authentic: I never saw Gene as somebody who indulged in pretense. He was salt of the earth.

### **5) As a friend of yours, how did Gene influence you?**

I can probably blame Gene for my Motown obsession, because it started with his version of Marvin Gaye's "Inner City Blues." I've got Gene to thank for *What's Going On*, which I'm pretty sure I couldn't live without. And yeah, I was late to the whole Leonard Cohen party, too. I can't imagine life now without songs like "Suzanne," "First We Take Manhattan" or "Hallelujah." Of course, Cohen is name-checked during "Lenny," but what sparked my attention was that Gene had Leonard Cohen racked with his demo tapes, Aunt Bettys rough mixes and DATs in the control room at the Green Room. I put a cover of "Songwork" on the *No Outlet* album with Ping, but I'd call that tribute rather than influence. Michele sang that with us at Gene's memorial, which gave me goose bumps. The other people you've spoken with will have more to say about friendship with Gene, and I'll look forward to reading that. I can claim being on a first name basis with him, and he'd take my calls. But I was really just someone who respected various facets of his work, who was lucky enough to interact with him for a few years. Like I've mentioned before, I think I learned craft from Gene. I learned things like not compromising on a lyric, but not getting hung up on technical minutiae in the studio when the soul of the music is so much more important. I also learned the value of knowing where all your spare backline gear is at a big show, and that maybe it's smart to work out some hand signals in advance. :-)

**1) How did you first meet Gene?**

Gene and I met when we were just 19 years old. I think it was the summer, or fall, of 1981. The way we met was Paul Valadez, our bass player in Adam Again, grew up with Gene and known him since before they were teenagers. Paul and I had a band together that had been going for a couple of months and he said he had this friend that was really good, he played guitar, keyboards and drums, and he asked if he could bring him down, I agreed and so that's how we met. Gene was really quiet, and if I remember right there was quite some time before our second meeting, maybe a few months. I haven't thought about this in some time so it's slowly coming back... we had a brief meeting and then a couple of months later Paul and I decided to start a new band, we asked Gene to be a part of that and he agreed. Not long after that Gene took over leadership. People are probably surprised by that, Paul and I were in the band before Gene, but once Gene got involved we soon realized that he had better leadership qualities than either of us. The three of us were in the band that went through a couple of incarnations before it became Adam Again. We all attended the same church where Michele's father was the pastor, so we already knew her. Adam Again was together about 5 years before Jon Knox came on board. The first two albums were recorded with a drum kit, not live drums. We put an ad in a Southern California paper and Jon was one of a couple of people that responded, and he joined sometime around the summer of 1989, but he could probably tell you better on the exact dates.

**2) What projects did you work on with Gene?**

Outside of the Adam Again albums, I worked on a few others with Gene and Terry Taylor. I played on the Scaterd Few album, a Choir song or two and several others, but not too many outside of Adam Again.

**3) How do you think Gene impacted the music scene?**

He was definitely involved in a lot, Tooth & Nail records and some others ones, but they would probably be able to answer that better than I would.

**4) How did the songwriting process in Adam Again work?**

Up until our record *Dig*, it was all Gene, and we were totally happy with that... I mean, ya know, I love Gene's songs. When we were recording the *Dig* album I had started a couple of side bands because Adam Again didn't play live that often and I wanted to play a little more. So occasionally I had a little side band and I would write a few songs, then around the *Dig* album I would give some of my ideas to Gene and he would change them around a bit, make them better than I could (laughter). So, I guess those songs are co-written on those two albums, *Dig* and a little on *Perfecta*. They were basically just riffs of mine, or songs that were in other forms that I just gave to him to do whatever he wanted with them. So it was a bit more of a collaboration at the end, but the majority of songwriting in Adam Again was all Gene.

**5) Three words you would use to describe Gene?**

Yeah, I don't know if I can give you three words, but I can... ya know, I loved Gene, as a person, as a friend and as a brother. I loved his music, we played together long before Adam Again when we practiced in Michele's dad's church. They let us practice 4 or 5 nights a week, and he'd have a new song at almost every practice and I just loved playing with him. You know, in all these years I've never really done an interview like this where I had to put all these thoughts into words. Musically I looked up to Gene so much, I just thought he was fantastic, he was great, I mean he could play anything. He was a great keyboard player, a great guitarist, but in a different sense than a lead guitar player or something like that, I can't imagine a greater rhythm guitar player. A lot of people don't know that he could play drums, I admired his musical abilities and his gifts in the studio. He was one of the most intelligent people that I knew, it seems like when we would hang out he would read 3 or 4 different newspapers a day.

**6) As a friend how did Gene influence you?**

Oh my gosh, he influenced my life in so many ways. The music I will make the rest of my life will always be influenced by Gene. When we first met he had this huge record collection, stuff that I had never heard of that wasn't even on my radar, so he influenced me with that and with how I perceived music. As time went on I always appreciated how at a young age he was aware of things like social justice, that was real heavy on his heart, and he brought that to my attention for the first time. His political views, his views on his walk with Christ and probably a lot more that I can't think of right now or even put into words. I think about Gene all the time and I still miss him a lot, not just because of the music we played, but I miss his friendship dearly. Next to my wife and kids he was one of the most important people in my life.



This page: Ten Songs photo shoot, provided by Todd Zeller

**1) When/how did you first meet Gene?**

I'm not sure when or how I first met him, but my earliest memory of Gene is when they recorded *Ten Songs* for Adam Again simultaneous with our recording of *Chase The Kangaroo*. It was Derri's studio, and The Choir would work most of the day, and then Gene would come in around 10 or 11PM, and work from midnight, all night long. So our creative worlds collided and I ended up interacting, staying late into the night, and Gene ended up engineering for us... it was just overlap. I started writing lyrics on some of Gene's songs, and playing percussion, and like I said he started engineering for us. That's my original memory of him, that original relationship developing.

**2) What projects were you involved in with Gene?**

Well on *Homeboys*, the song "Hide Away" was the only song. I wrote the entire lyric to Gene's music and I was really pleased with that song. That was pretty special to me, and then on *Ten Songs* I wrote some lyrics on "Beat Peculiar," "Tree House" and maybe something else... but, those were the two projects I was most involved with.

**3) How do you think Gene shaped/impacted the music scene?**

He produced a lot of bands at The Green Room. His studio was very affordable and he was a real hands-off kind of producer and engineer. He kind of let people do their own thing. He was the kind of producer where the boat was coming into the harbor and he would grab the chain and wrap it around the post, if that makes any sense, and so I think that resulted in a lot of creativity. A lot of bands that worked there during that period of time were able to find their own way and not be over produced. I think there was a lot of raw beauty back in that day. I think with all of the Tooth & Nail bands that he really allowed them to be raw and unique and really bring out that beauty, so I think that had to be good for music. There's nothing better than raw beauty from an artist if you can pull that out. The fact that so much music came out of The Green Room, and he had his hands in so much music, that had to have had an impact.

**4) Three words to describe Gene?**

Six words come to mind right away. I'll narrow it down, but I'm thinking he was generous, he undercharged for his studio and his time. He was a gambler, quite literally. He was spirited in a childlike way. Gifted with his engineering, he didn't know what he was doing, it was all intuitive. He wasn't a very hard worker, he did it for fun, he did music for fun so I definitely think he was gifted. Definitely the most peculiar person I've ever known, there were so many strange things about him. He had his own sense of dress, his studio was called The Green Room but he wouldn't eat anything green. I don't just mean vegetables, if it was a green M&M, a jellybean or a pickle, if it was green he wouldn't eat it. He was street smart, and he was shady... definitely. Interesting that he was shady in ways of business, but he maintained fond relationships. He had a high tolerance for other people, for quirky people, for troubled people and people with flaws. I think that's why people extended him a lot of grace, and in return he didn't seem to hold grudges. He had a strong sense of self and a real confidence in his ear. I think that's the makings of a good producer and engineer, I think it's real important to be confident in your ear and in your musical sensibility, and he would quickly say what he thought and it didn't take him long to mix songs because he knew what he wanted. He was very confident in his ear and his musical opinion.

**5) As a friend how did Gene influence you?**

He extended me a lot of mercy. You know, um... there's some personal stuff that went on between us, and I had offended him in some way, and he extended me a great deal of mercy. That has influenced me to be merciful to others... definitely.



Adam Again promo shot, provided by Todd Zeller

**1) When/how did you first meet Gene?**

I met Gene in May 1983. I remember the date because the very day the *God Rules* album came out, we played with Gene's band Martus. Sim Wilson was also in that band with Greg Lawless, Paul Valadez and Riki Michele, and they would go on to form Adam Again after Sim left to join us in Undercover. The concert was held at Riki's father's church in Ontario, CA.

**2) What projects were you involved in with Gene?**

There were too many to list. We were first involved together with Undercover because after Sim joined us, Gene became our soundman, then our booking agent and then our road manager. In 1986 we recorded *Branded* and we were initially to have released it on the label we had been on for years, Broken Records, then owned by Maranatha Music. When that fell through for a number of reasons, Gene suggested that we release it through a start-up label owned by Harry Barnes called Blue Collar. Harry had secured national distribution and had released 4-4-1's first album on his label. Gene had also planned to release Adam Again's first record on that label. So, that's what we did. After a very short while Blue Collar was out of business because their distributor did not pay him what they owed, and so the album masters reverted back to the artists.

We recorded our live album 3-28-87 at Six Flags Magic Mountain and Gene was the house engineer for that, but did not engineer the record. So with that album under our belts, the masters from *Branded* and Adam Again's *Ten Songs*, we considered starting our own label and went to Chuck Fromm, president of Maranatha. He was supportive and offered to sell Gene and me Broken Records. We negotiated a deal, secured distribution through Word Records, and that started a long history of albums that Gene and I worked on together over 8 or 9 years. Last time I counted there were about 100 albums we released and/or worked on together at some level.

**3) How do you think Gene shaped/impacted the music scene?**

I cannot be objective about that. At his funeral I'll say that I was dumbstruck at the number of people in attendance and how they were all impacted in some way. I had been out of Christian music for about 5 years by then and I guess I had not given it much thought. I knew he was loved and relied on by other artists he worked with, all the guys in Swirling Eddies and Lost Dogs and his own band Adam Again, and those he produced, both on our label and outside. I suppose Gene, like most all of us in So Cal at that time, marched to his own drummer.

**4) Three words that you would use to describe Gene and why?**

Gene was a complicated person and three words really aren't enough. He was very funny, very bright, talented, generous, a lot of fun and exasperating. I know the tendency is to idolize him, especially because he died in his prime in many ways, but he was not perfect as his own album lyrics attest. We had stopped working together in 1996, four years before he died, and we didn't see each other all that much afterwards, perhaps a few times a year. There were reasons why, although in my mind they were not personal. We were just working on different things and I had pretty much disenfranchised myself from Christian music by then. I loved him.

**5) As a friend of yours, how did Gene influence you?**

I would guess that during the 8 or 9 Brainstorm (Broken) years, we met literally almost everyday (when we were both in town) to talk about our business, to strategize, to hang out, to solve the world's problems, sometimes just to talk or play poker with friends or something. Then there were the 4, or so, years before Brainstorm where he worked with Undercover. We traveled together often, sometimes for extended periods, like when Undercover was touring overseas. After all that, and all that we went through, it's not a matter of influence. We had become completely integrated into each others lives. I still see many of his "isms" in me, and I saw many of mine in him too. He was a big part of Undercover. I'm incredibly proud of what the two of us accomplished at Brainstorm, and the ways that he brought me into the creative processes with Adam Again. That was rare because Adam Again was closely held and he was very private about that. So how did he influence me? I find him in my work still during those years. What we accomplished together in our bands and at our label testifies to our mutual influences on each other. He went on to his own accomplishments after that, of course because he was still growing into himself when he died. That was Gene.

**1) When/how did you first meet Gene?**

That's one of my favorite stories... It was back in 1990 in Albrecht, Holland and The 77's were playing a festival there. I had seen Gene and Michele on the streets around town, but hadn't met them yet. Anyway, we were staying at this hotel and I was tired, weary from the trip, and decided to go down and eat breakfast. I didn't change out of my pajamas, which for anyone who knows me knows that it is not that unusual. So, I sat down beside Michele to eat breakfast. Later, after I had met Gene he said he saw me across the room and was thinking, "Man, who is this guy eating breakfast, in his pajamas, with my wife." We became closer when I was going through a difficult time in regards to my divorce, and I called the Broken offices and Gene was the one who answered the phone. I told him what I was going through, and he was going through some similar things, so it was that opening up and sharing our intimate details that really drew and I closer on a personal level. This was back in '90, about a year before The Lost Dogs formed in '91.

**2) What projects did you work on with Gene?**

All The Lost Dogs albums before he died... *Scenic Routes*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Green Room Serenade*, *Gift Horse*, and there was the post-humus *Live at the Green Room*. I also played a little on Michele's second album *One Moment Please*.

**3) How do you think Gene impacted the music scene?**

Gene worked with so many bands, and he gave of himself and his time to all these people. In the studio you become a bands everything, and that's what he did... and many of these bands were green, but he was always there for them, and it was genuine... he really wanted to be there, he cared about them and their music, and that's important. A lot of these bands, even if they don't make it, if they become car salesmen, or whatever, they will remember Gene and what he did for them, what he gave to them and how he was there for them. It didn't matter how long it took, he gave his best to them.

**4) Three words you would use to describe Gene?**

It's not three words, but I came up with this recently. Genius musician, amateur human being and beloved brother. The amateur human being didn't apply to him when he was in the studio. (laughter)

**5) How did Gene influence you?**

If there was an influence, it would be a culmination of everything above. For every one band that I produced, Gene produced dozens. He gave of himself on a personal level, and that's important and what I try to do so also. You give your time and try to become what they need in the studio.

Some funny musings from Mike when talking about Gene were, "Gene was like he was from a different time. It was as if he was one of the Bowery Boys, or the Three Stooges. He should have been a farmer or something because he was a barter guy... like you give him a sack of oats or beans and you barter with him. He was not good at things of this life like money and keeping track of finances. He was intelligent, but not in a book smart way. He was street smart, and could function well in that capacity. He could always spot a mark and he couldn't wait to get out of the studio and bet on a horse. I was very close to all the people Gene was..."



Gene, Marie McGilvray, and Riki Michele



**1) When/how did you first meet Gene?**

I first met Gene back in 1982 when he was in a band called Martus. Sim of Undercover was also in that group as well. If my memory is correct I believe Gene was on keys. Anyway, it was this outdoor gig and both Martus and us (Altar Boys) were on this huge rickety old trailer that was converted to a stage. I still have pictures of that gig somewhere. I actually don't recall how much interaction I had with Gene, but I remember going away from that gig really liking all the members of Martus. We played together a couple of times after that.

**2) What projects were you involved in with him?**

I worked on two projects with Gene at the Green Room. The first recording he worked with us on was the second "Clash of Symbols" project (*Begging at the Temple Gate Called Beautiful*). He did a little engineering and producing. Mark Rodriguez was the main engineer on that project, but Gene would pop his head in, put in his two cents and subbed a couple of times for Mark. Before this time I do not recall ever working a lot with Gene – which is unfortunate – I did hear his name a lot as a quality producer and of course we had basically the same circle of friends. But the first project I really heard him do was the second Swirling Eddies recording. I was impressed by it, but I always thought the snare was too loud, and I would always rib him about it...."Hey Gene, what's up with that snare?? Do you think you could have made it louder??" He would of course just laugh at me and say, "What are you talking about? It sounds great?"

In 1997 or early 96 I asked Gene to help me with *Full Circle* - my 3rd solo project. We recorded several songs and mixed a few of them down. I loved working with him, and just remember laughing and laughing with him. All I did was laugh during those sessions. When he died I was devastated. Fortunately, I was able to take the 2 inch tape, transfer it on pro tools and Bobby Hartry and a number of my friends finished it up. The finger prints of Gene are all over that project. I know he would have been proud of it.

**3) How do you think Gene shaped and impacted the music scene?**

I think Gene helped to bring a certain edge and style to Christian music that was missing. However, I feel that his influence is more subtle and not as direct as some might think - others might feel different. But if you ask any of today's groups or Christian artists about Gene Eugene, they would probably just give you a blank look. Yet, his influence is there and I can hear it in some of today's music. Again, I will hear an arrangement or part in a song, and think to myself, "humm, sounds like something Gene would do....I really miss him."

**4) Three words that you would use to describe Gene?**

The real thing.

**5) As a friend of yours, how did Gene influence you?**

I think what I like best about Gene was how he accepted, understood, encouraged and respected me as an artist and a person. To be quite frank, for whatever reason I feel I have been misunderstood and am a bit alienated by more than a few artists that run in Gene's circle – for whatever reason, maybe it's my breath. More likely it is because I have a history of being somewhat intense and at times a little difficult, oh well. But with Gene it was always good, no weird vibes, he never made me feel uneasy or tried to intimidate me, most importantly he gave me the benefit of the doubt and never held my faults against me... hence a true friend, I appreciated that in him, more than you could ever know.

A week or so before he died, Gene and I sat and talked for a couple of hours in the kitchen at the Green Room. It was really difficult to get his undivided attention because he always had so much going on and there was always someone stopping by the Green Room. So this was a very unique situation, I feel that time we spent together was a gift from God. It was a special time that I will always treasure. He told me some very nice things about myself that were thoughtful and had a lot of insight. In the end, I think what I loved most about Gene is he could bring out the best in you, both as an artist and a person, and that is a real gift and something that not all people can do.... Like Gene, Bob Hartry also has that ability too. Guys like him and Gene are few and far between. I am a better person for having known Gene, I think about him often, and miss him dearly.

**1. When/how did you first meet Gene?**

Well, I'm not really good with years, but I'm thinking it was probably the mid '80's... somewhere in there. I knew about AA and had seen them perform a couple of times, I knew their records. The first time I ever talked to Gene... it was Gene and Michele, and they wanted me to produce their... I think it was their second record. I met with them at a restaurant and we talked about it, but it didn't work out in the end. The second time I really connected to Gene was when Daniel Amos was doing *Damn Floor Big Bite*. I was putting together a group of musicians as background vocalists on a song called "The Shape Of Air," which ended that record, and I don't remember how I hooked up with them, probably just thought "Well I know them from AA" so I just gave them a call to see if they wanted to be involved. They came over and there were 7 or 8 of the different people that sang on that record. Gene hung around afterwards and wanted to hear more of the record and I played it for him. He was delighted with it, ya know... he loved it and asked me questions about the back ground vocals and the harmony parts, about how you figure those out. I said basically I get in front of the microphone and I try stuff, and he kinda laughed about that. That was the first time that we really had any extended conversation. The first time I had any full on workings with him, and I may be mistaken about this, but the first time we worked together was on a record of a group called Jacob's Trouble. He engineered that and was great to work with. Really a great contributor and very humble about his suggestions, and very skilled. I could tell even at that point in time his skill and as time went on he became one of the great studio technicians and grew in his craft. So that how I was introduced to his abilities and skill level concerning engineering and his production work... and that came as his reputation continued to grow.

**2. What projects that you worked on with Gene stand out as the most memorable and why?**

I think of all the projects, the ones that stand out are The Lost Dogs projects because The Lost Dogs concept - four guys from alternative bands, and we do this one off, originally just one record - it was Gene's idea. It was in some ways surprising, unexpected for me, to have built the relationships that we did. Mike Roe is one of my dearest, best friends and that came about through Gene.

**3. How do you think Gene impacted the music scene?**

I don't really know how to measure that. I know how he impacted me and I know how he impacted others around me. I think he was a champion. He was a motivator who brought the best out in people. He probably had the same effect on those he worked with that he had on me, which was making me better than I am and raising the bar. I know all of us have been involved with a few dud projects where you're in there, and you're getting paid just hacking away at it trying to make something out of it. There was never a project that Gene did, no matter how sort of amateurish, that he didn't just put all he had into it. So if you drew up a list of projects that Gene did that he could be proud of, it would be most of them. He wasn't in there making records just for the sake of making records. He really wanted to do something, and say something, about the faith and say something that really had some integrity. I think integrity was Gene's middle name, and he brought that to every project he ever worked on, so in that regard, I imagine in countless ways he had an impact on the overall scene. In other words, Christian music that was relevant and not just a Jesus mantra of some sort, or something that was trite... but music that was relevant. That was Gene's forte, being able to stay current, at least sonically, and he also sat on people about things like lyrics. If a lyric bothered him that someone had written, he would have input into that... but never with bullying, it was always respectful and humble.

**4. Three words you would use to describe Gene and why?**

Hilarious (laughter) would be one. Hilarious in the sense that... Gene didn't tell jokes, Gene would make little, sort of under the radar remarks that would leave me reeling. For instance, whenever I was in the studio and we would be working on a project, invariably at some point Gene would get this impish grin on his face and he would say, "Oops". That could mean that he had either failed to punch in something he should have punched in, which was a little problem, or it could have meant that he erased the entire drum track (more laughing). You never knew what "oops" meant.

A barterer... he was on the barter system. This was an old school guy ya know. Financial stuff he just wasn't great at, and he was juggling a lot of balls in that regard, but Gene would always manage to land on his feet. He would use the barter system... for instance, if you loaned him some money and he couldn't pay you back, he would bring you in for some studio time or whatever. He had a hundred different ways of handling his business situations, because with the business we're in you're always robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Champion would be a third word... champion of others, and that goes back to what I was originally talking about earlier. He brought the best out of you in terms of your own musicianship. He loved good music and loved being with good musicians, and he loved the potential of that relationship. He was always able, in any given situation, to bring out the very best in whoever he was working with. Some people that didn't even have a lot of talent, he was still able to get things out of them, and do things beyond what they even thought they were probably capable of doing. Part of the sadness of that though... is Gene never slowed down. I know as a friend, and I know other friends, would say "Man, you gotta get away, you gotta eat better, you gotta get more sleep, you gotta take a vacation, you gotta get out of this thing for awhile." He would say he was going to, but he just wasn't capable of doing less than a hundred percent. So I think that the studio sort of became his life. It not only brought him joy, but I think it brought him a lot of pain to because he was sort of married to it and just couldn't keep from going all the way.

**5. As a friend how did Gene influence you?**

I've already touched on it a little bit, but Gene taught me to listen. He taught me to listen to other people, and Gene didn't have to fake an interest in other people, it was natural to him. He would seek them out, and was outgoing in that regard, where I'm more reclusive and less open to people. I think being in Gene's company would bring... because of the joy he received from hearing other peoples tales and stories, and his affinity for them, and his genuine interest... that would make you want to experience the same sort of joy, and to open yourself up which is of course what happens... and it takes you outside of yourself, it takes you from the inward to the outward so that you're not consumed with your own story, your own life, your own problems and your own fears. You've expanded yourself to listen to someone else and their tale, whether it's a tale of woe, a tale of joy or whatever it may be. Just having the ability to listen and bring those stories out of people is something Gene did for me. It expanded my life, and consequently when that happens it affects you as a musician because you are the teller of tales. Gene directly affected me in my songwriting because rather than repeating my story endlessly, I was able to tell other peoples story through song and put myself in their place. His ability to listen to people and observe became sort of a habit for me, and one that I exercise in order to not only become a better person, and a better person to those around me, but also to become a better songwriter.

1) When did you first meet Gene?

At a Daniel Amos record release party.

2) What projects were you involved in with him?

1994	Spill	Plankeye	Engineer	
1995	Starflyer 59 (Gold)	Starflyer 59	Mixing	
1995	Spark	Plankeye	Producer, Mixing	
1996	Art Core, Vol. 2: Art of Drum & Bass	Various Artists	Mixing	
1996	Commonwealth	Plankeye	Producer, Engineer, Mixing	
1996	Strip Cycle	Mike Knott	Engineer	
1997	Americana	Starflyer 59	Organ (Hammond), Producer, Vibraphone, Fender Rhodes	
1997	Dogfish Jones	L.S.U.	Organ	
1997	One and Only	Plankeye	Organ, Producer, Engineer, Mixing, Wurlitzer	
1997	Robot Rock	Joy Electric	Producer	
1997	Ultra Forever	Fold Zandura	Producer, Engineer, Mixing	
1998	Bon Voyage	Bon Voyage	Producer, Mixing	
1998	Crackerjack	One Eighty	Keyboards, Producer, Engineer	
1998	Fashion Focus	Starflyer 59	Piano, Producer, Fender Rhodes	
1998	Happy Christmas: A BEC Holiday Collection	Various Artists	Organ, Producer, Engineer, Farfisa Organ, Mixing	
1999	Everybody Makes Mistakes	Starflyer 59	Producer	
1999	Fell in Love at 22 [EP]	Starflyer 59	Producer	
1999	Gift Horse	The Lost Dogs	Group Member	
1999	Here Comes Fanmail [EP]	Fanmail	Keyboards, Engineer	
1999	Latest Craze	Fanmail	Keyboards, Producer, Engineer	
1999	Lineup	Flight 180	Producer, Mixing	
1999	Relocation	Plankeye	Piano, Keyboards, Producer, Engineer	
1999	Swing Praise	Various Artists	Arranger, Producer, Engineer, Mixing	
1999	Yreka Bakery	Pep Squad	Guitar, Keyboards, Vocals, Producer, Mixing	
2000	Dust	Sup the Chemist	Engineer, Mixing	
2000	Fanmail 2000	Fanmail	Engineer	
2000	When the World Sings	Finechina	Engineer	
2001	Any Given Day: Passionate Worship for the Soul	Various Artists	Keyboards, Engineer	

3) How do you think Gene shaped/impacted the music scene?

Turned the Christian scene upside down with his band, production, and label (Brain Storm). Legitimized Christian hip hop with groups like SFC.

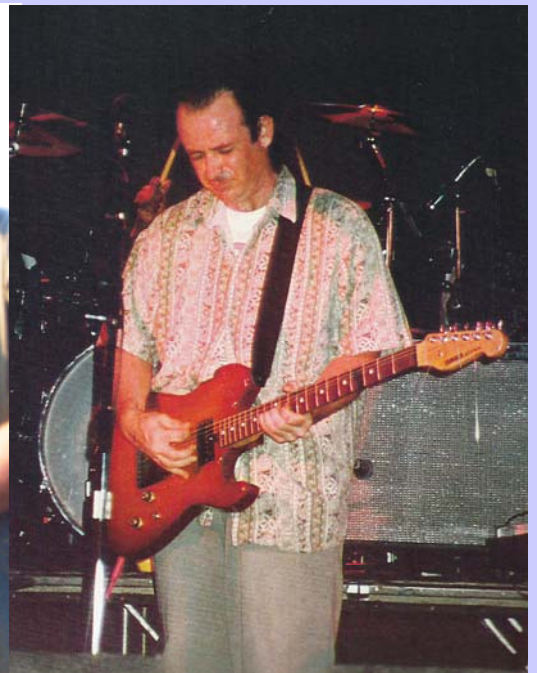
4) Three words you would use to describe Gene and why?

Genius - amazing producer and song writer

Diplomat - got along with everyone

Quirky - Never knew what he was going to do next

Adam Again promo shot and Gene Eugene live, provided by Todd Zeller



*I didn't ask Carole the typical questions that I asked everyone else, she obviously had a very different relationship with Gene. It was somewhat difficult asking a Mother about her deceased son, but she was very comfortable and eager to talk about Gene. Carole has been through a lot, as I stated earlier, she has lost 3 of her 4 children. At the time of this article, Gene's sister Lisa was moving to be with Carole and she was really happy about that...*

**1) How would you describe your relationship with Gene?**

Gene and I had a normal mother-son relationship. We were very close and he promised that he would someday build me a castle. One month before he passed away he and I talked and he said, "Mom, I am finally on my way to building you that castle you deserve."

**2) What were some of your proudest moments of your son?**

I don't know that there is one proudest memory I have of Gene, as I was proud of all that he accomplished. I was proud of the job he did as valedictorian of high school. I was proud when he got picked to go to Boy's Town in Sacramento during his senior year in high school. I was proud when he decided he wanted to be an actor, but also proud when he quit acting to concentrate in his music.

**3) Five words you would use to describe Gene?**

Loyal, humble, giving, off the charts and humorous. He was loyal to all his band members and all the bands he committed his time to, as well as his family. He was humble, as things like cars, clothes, money, furniture, etc. were never important to him. He was giving, as he gave of himself so much that he never took care of Gene. He was off the charts talented and the world should have enjoyed all of his work, but that wasn't part of the agenda. He was also very witty and funny and made the family laugh all the time.

**4) Where do you think Gene got his musical influence?**

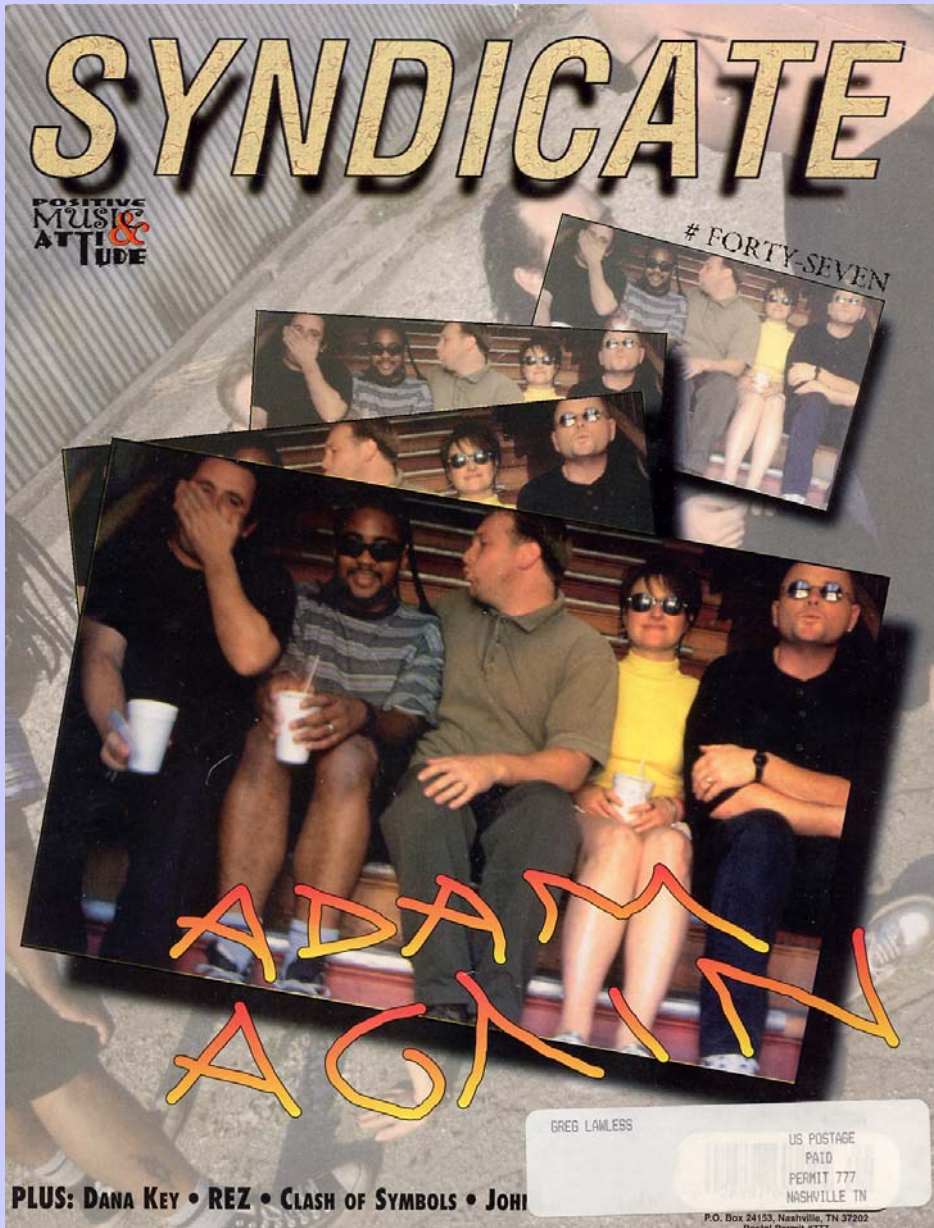
Gene was drawn to music probably because he came from a very musical background. His father, and several uncles, sang and played numerous instruments. I also played accordion and dabbled on the drums a bit. There was always music going on in our home and it just came natural to him. I want my son to be remembered for just being him, but also for the lyrics in his music that always told a story of what was going on in his life when he wrote them.

**5) What stories do you remember about him growing up?**

He was such a good boy that I might have to make something up. He did play little league, and he loved it, but got Brights disease at 8 years old and had to stop for a year. He also was helping his dad work on the engine of his car, some gasoline spilled and there was a spark, and Gene caught on fire. I saw him running from the garage, on fire, and being a mother I just panicked and screamed. Thank God for his Boy Scout training, he knew enough to lay on the ground and roll. He had 3<sup>rd</sup> degree burns from his knees to his sock line, and he had to have them peeled and peeled for months. I used to ask him if he wanted something to bite on when the doctor's peeled the top skin off, but he was such a champ, he never cried or complained and he was in a wheelchair for quite some time. Gene never wore shorts after that as he was scarred badly and it bothered him terribly. Gene received many awards such as Boy Scouts, baseball and leadership awards. The one award he passed away before knowing he got was the Dove award... I display that proudly on my mantel. Gene gave his life to his music, he didn't care about the money, he just wanted to help other bands get started. He was a humble person, you would have enjoyed knowing him.

If you need me to expound more on how much my son meant to me, I can only say that words cannot describe the huge piece of me that is now missing. Gene was a devout Christian, but he did write a lot about why things happen in this world like war, famine, if there really is a God. I am still searching for why He took Gene when he did so much good for mankind. I know there will never be an answer to that question, I have to accept what fate handed me knowing the God has the power to take any one of us at anytime. I only wish it would have been me. Gene was my child that could always make me feel better during the worst of times. I think what I miss most was his gift to light up the room with a smile.

I loved my brother very much. As we were growing up he teased me all the time because we were so different. He loved to tease me about the music I listened to, stuff like Donny & Marie Osmond and The Jackson Five. Gene had incredible talent and I looked up to him so much. I remember a play he did in high school called *Godspell*, and as I sat in the audience and watched him play the piano and sing, my heart would swell with pride. I would always brag to all my friends that Gene Andrusco was my brother, and actually that's how I was known in school... as Gene Andrusco's sister. Hardly a day goes by that I do not think of Gene, and I miss him more than words can say.



Adam Again on the cover of Syndicate magazine. courtesy of Greg Lawless



Gene and Mike Knott live. Photo courtesy of Jeremy Ladan

# Gene Eugene: A Special Photo Selection

All images courtesy of Gene's mother, Carole Gilliland



**GENE ANDRUSCO**

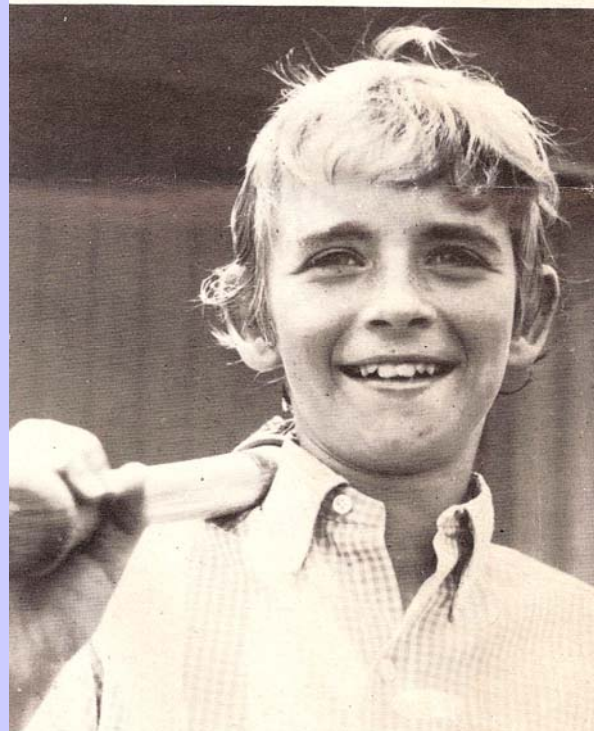
(Alternate David Considine)

**GENE ANDRUSCO** (Alternate David Considine) is a native of Canada, but of Irish and Ukranian descent. Ten year old Gene began his acting career in 1969 and has appeared before TV cameras in Nancy, Bewitched, and Funny Face. His feature film debut can be viewed in Gidget Gets Married.

This talented young man could pinch-hit on several instruments in a band; he plays the piano, drums, guitar and clarinet. He keeps in good physical shape by playing third base in Little League baseball.



## TONIGHT!



# GENE ANDRUSCO

**GUEST STARRING**

## "CANNON"

**10 P.M.**

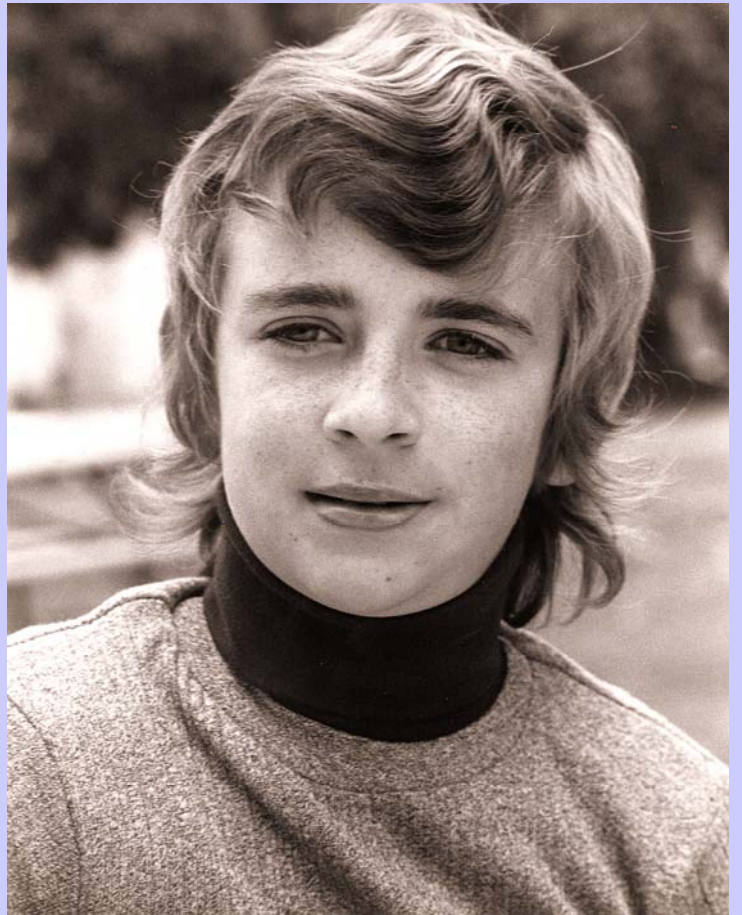
**CBS-TV**

**GUEST STARRING**  
**"THE BOLD ONES"**  
*Currently Shooting*

Representation:  
**Hal Shafer**  
Agency

Commercials:  
**Colee Viedelle**  
Herb Tannen Agency







**Page 21, clockwise:** Christmas 1970 (Gene, Todd, & Lisa), Newspaper ad for "Cannon" 1972, 2 baby photos, Gene in "The Wake" 1971.

**Page 22:** Promo shots

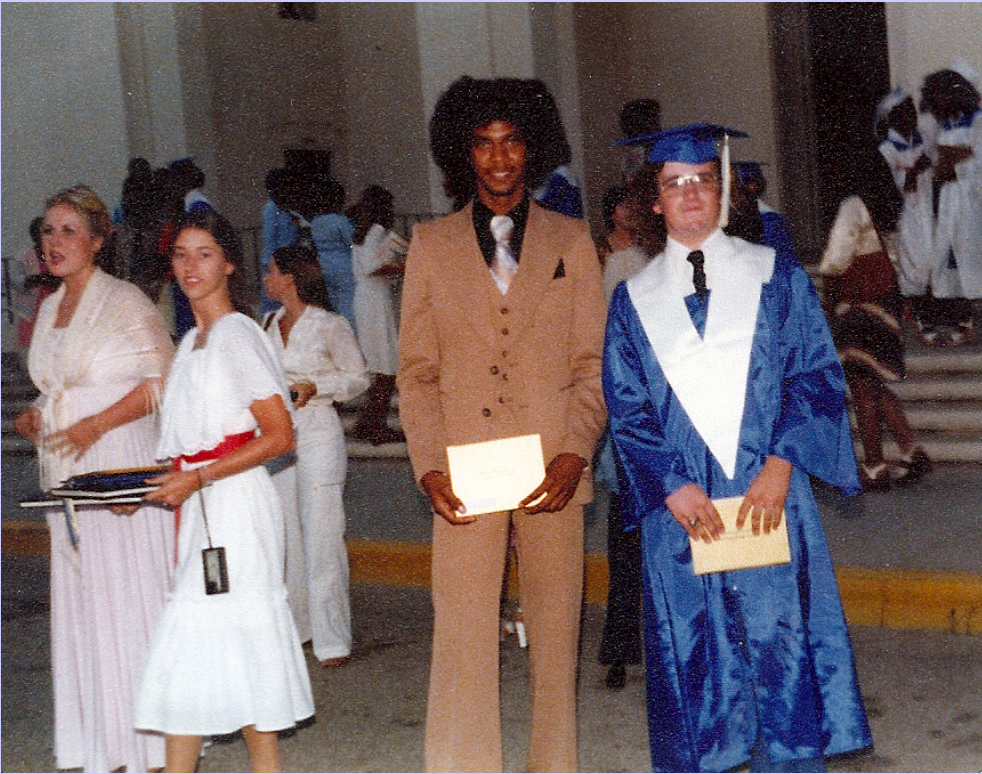
**This page, clockwise:** 2 more promo shots, Gene's first car, Gene in Little League

**Page 24, clockwise:** Graduation photo, senior picture, early live shot, band and date unknown.

**Page 25, clockwise:** another early live shot, Gene's sister Lisa, Gene with his brother Todd.

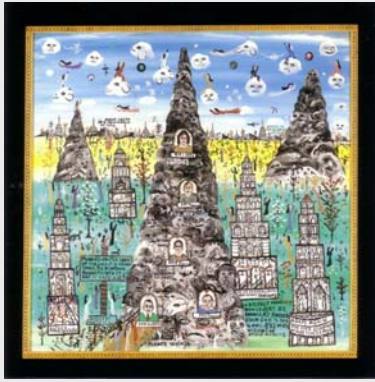
**Page 26:** Gene practicing, date unknown.







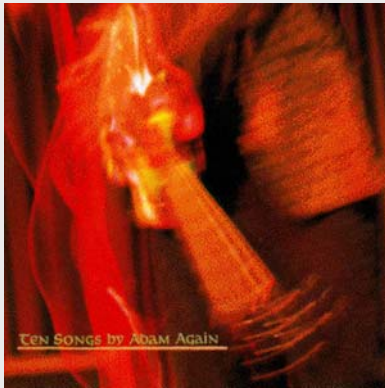




**ADAM AGAIN  
IN A NEW WOLD OF TIME**

1986 Blue Collar Records  
Review by: Steve Ruff

The first release by the band who would become a staple in alternative Christian music. This is by far the most varied record that AA put out. Dating all the way back to 1986... but it was still unique and different for its time. This one is chock full of every genre you can imagine... R&B, rock, funk, soul and pop. The band sounds bright, fluid and full of life. To me Gene's voice sounds a bit different then the other recordings that came later. This one would also be the most "Christian" release that they did with the majority of the songs centered on Christ or biblical issues. I'm not saying that the other releases are not "Christian," this one is just more overt in that sense. Also, the cover art was done by the amazing, and now deceased, folk artist Howard Finister. If you don't have this one it is still available through The Choir's website as a download - [www.thechoir.net](http://www.thechoir.net) - This is the only release that I know of that is still available outside of places like eBay, but you should also keep an eye on eBay as you can generally find it on CD and vinyl. The programmed drums here also give this a very '80's feel. A worthy first offering by a band that still stands apart from the crowd.



**ADAM AGAIN  
TEN SONGS**

1988 Broken Records  
2002 Lo-Fidelity Records  
Review by: Steve Ruff

Ten Songs was originally released in 1988, and then re-released in 2002 through Lo-Fidelity Records. A definite classic that is probably the hardest to find anywhere. While still recorded with programmed drums, this record was a definite step away from their first release. Ten songs just sounds much more cohesive to me. This is where I think Gene's lyrics really started to come into their own and shine. While still "Christian" in perspective and reflection, themes here include equality, honesty, consequence and longing. I think this record is where Greg's guitar playing really starts to come to the front and have a chance to shine as well. My favorite thing about this album was that lyrics like these were truly unique at this point in the Christian music scene. Gene had the ability to really challenge the listener and make them think. A definite 'alternative' release. Good luck finding this one if you don't already have it. Sometimes you can find the cassette on eBay, and if you do, snatch it up and just convert it to digital.

"Today if I called you  
Would you tell me I'm wrong,  
With the way I've come to believe  
Will I ever belong?"... "Eyes Wide Open"



**ADAM AGAIN  
HOMEBOYS**

1990 Broken Records  
Review by: Steve Ruff

This is one of my favorite records that Adam Again did. With each release these guys grew as a band and you can hear the depth come through on every release. Again, for me, Gene's lyrics were always genius. The songs that he chose to cover really conveyed a message and a theme that one typically did not hear anyone else tackling in the Christian scene at the time. The cover of Marvin Gaye's "Inner City Blues" is amazing. "Homeboys," the title track, is a reflection of Gene's youth and where he grew up, but there is also an undercurrent that always speaks to me of racial equality in that song. "Bad News on the Radio" is one of the most descriptive stories that conveys emotion and really drives it home to the listener... I have always thought that track was unparalleled. Riki Michele, Steve Hindalong and Terry Taylor also contributed lyrics here, as well as the band welcoming Jon Knox on the drums. "This Band Is Our House" speaks to the cohesiveness of the band and how they were a family... "No Regrets" is really haunting at this point, a very final and sad way to close out the record. Musically the band sounds very tight and together. Dan Michael's sax playing was always so unique to the band, and gave them a flavor unlike any other groups that were out there. All in all, one of the best releases (in my opinion), and a sort of guide for the direction that the band was heading



## ADAM AGAIN DIG

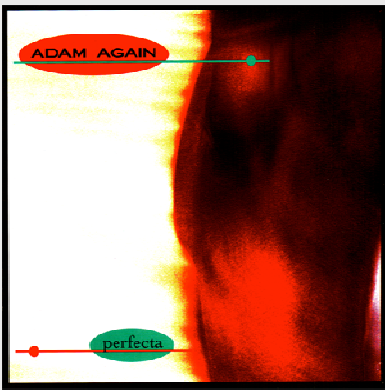
1992 Brainstorm

Review by: Matt Crosslin

This is where it started for me with Adam Again... the first album of theirs that I ever heard. This album, along with L.S.U.'s *The Grape Prophet* and *Pray Naked* by The 77s, also helped me transition from a diehard metal-head punk to a person with well-rounded musical tastes. Something about those guitar tones just really connected with me, but it was the well-crafted lyrics and excellent song structures that kept bringing me back time and time again. This is still the classic Adam Again album that I recommend as a starting point for anyone that is not familiar with the band.

And this really is a band effort where everyone shines. As a bass player, I have to point out the excellent bass lines from Paul Valdez that are everywhere. But let's not forget the skillful six-string work of Greg Lawless and Gene Eugene. Gene's voice is its classic mournful self here, contrasted nicely by Riki Michele. Jon Knox also continues his solid drum work on his second album with the band.

As many friends of Gene have said, he agonized over the lyrics. He never wanted to have throw away lyrics. The lyrics on this album are just packed full of meaning, if you care to dig in (pun not intended). The first song tells you what to expect from the get-go: "Deep." I can't pick out a favorite song, because I love them all; nor can I point out any weak songs – because there isn't one at all. You can find it for a few dollars on Amazon.com for now... but I'm voting for a re-issue... if anyone out there is keeping score....



## ADAM AGAIN PERFECTA

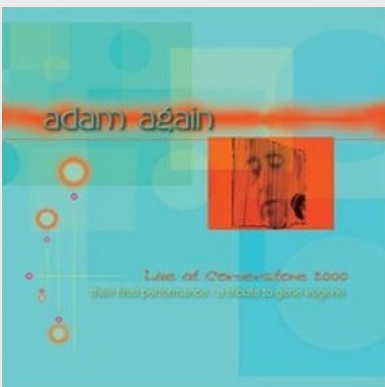
1995 Brainstorm

Review by: Matt Crosslin

*Perfecta* is the rawest and (at times) loudest Adam Again disc. One reviewer even called it "the book of Job of music." This would be a very apt description. Gene's voice is pretty desperate at places here – whether he is asking himself what to do when the electricity goes out at his studio or expressing his sorrow over the main pains of life. There is still humor to be found scattered throughout the album. In "Harsh," you can hear a hint of sarcastic laughter when he sings "now be a dear and leave me alone." He is basically telling someone to go away... but he also finds something funny in the way he says it.

Heavy on Gene's heart at the time of this album was his recent divorce, but that is not all. Themes of loss slip in to many of the songs on the album. Much of the carefully crafted word play from *Dig* is gone, but the lyrics here are still deep and confessional even if they aren't twisting your tongue at the same time.

*Perfecta* was said to have been recorded live in the studio, during what Gene referred to as a "three-year jam session." That would probably be the best way to describe the whole album – an intense jam recorded while all the players involved were living and/or discussing some of the harder parts of life.



## ADAM AGAIN LIVE AT CORNERSTONE

2000 M8 Music

2001 Galaxy 21 Music

Review by: Matt Crosslin

There are two versions of this live tribute show floating around out there – both pretty much out of print. The original version was released by M8 records as a three disc set. It included live sets from 1995 and 1997 as well as the 2000 Cornerstone tribute show. The 2001 Galaxy 21 re-issue (pictured on the left) doesn't have the live shows from the 90s, but it does have a new track from Riki Michele and a bonus disc from Greg Lawless – his first solo album. The re-issue is much easier to find. Both have the live tribute concert that featured a who's who of Alternative music singing Gene's parts of classic Adam Again tunes. I was at this concert when it happened. It was a powerful night. There is really just no way to capture what was experienced in person that night. Emotions were high, understandably. Cornerstone was its usual hot, humid, muddy self... and this concert was late at night. But none of that stopped anyone from enjoying a great concert. This quality of the CD is really good, seeing that they had planned to record the show from the beginning. If you can hunt down the original M8 version, I would highly recommend it – that version contains some touching stories at the end from different friends of Gene. However, the re-issue is the better deal in my opinion, due to the new material it contains from Riki Michele and Greg Lawless. All of the new songs are totally different style-wise from than anything Adam Again ever did, but still solid music compositions all around.

"Walk between the raindrops if you can... what the heck does that mean?" I remember the conversation well - it was sometime around 1992 in San Antonio, TX. A group of college students had gone out to change the world by repainting a church in the poorer part of town. We had been told that a few hours after we packed up and left for the day that a gang fight had broken out around the corner and someone had been shot. Sobering news like that leads to deeper conversations. I was talking with the leader of our group, an awesome character by the name of Tim. Our group was made up of your typical college church crowd, so we spent the day listening to typical college church crowd music – Susan Ashton, Steven Curtis Chapman, D.C.Talk, etc. Tim and I had been lamenting the need to play some meatier music. Tim mused: "I wonder what they would think if we played some Adam Again? 'Walk between the rains drops if you can'... 'what the heck does that mean?' Or The 77s... 'The rain kept falling in love'... 'what?' That would drive them crazy!"

Gene Eugene had that unique gift as a writer. He could pen songs that you instantly understood at one level, and then realized that there was a whole other level you were probably missing. Even songs about the electricity getting cut off before a bunch a friends came over made you stop and wonder "am I missing some deeper point about the depravity of man?" Maybe it was just that voice - that mournful tone of his. Maybe I was just reading too much into it. Then someone sent me a bootleg concert where Gene sung his version of the Dolly Parton song (made famous by Whitney Houston) "I Will Always Love You." I thought that was a simple love song, until Gene pointed out that there was some deep stuff there. So maybe I'm not just reading too much into any of his songs.

And not to mention how they stick in your head. Every time it starts raining I start humming one of those two songs about rain in my head. One when it is a light, refreshing spring storm, and the other when it is a dark, brooding thunderstorm. If you have heard both songs about rain mentioned above, then you probably know which one comes to mind in which situation.

I even got to the point where I thought that there are some rain storms where you can walk between the raindrops if you try. Then I got caught in a monsoon rain in India... a wall of water falling on you from the sky. And that song came to mind. Yet another layer of that simple lyric became real to me.

I never met Gene, but I get the impression that he was all about layers. I've read several interviews with friends of his that attest to the fact that no one quite knew the same Gene. He revealed different aspects of himself to different people, as Steve Hindalong pointed out once. Mostly this magazine issue has covered feedback from people that knew and worked with Gene. But the other side of the coin is Gene's fans. Each one of knows a different layer of Gene, revealed through his deep and personal lyrics. Personal in how we all interpret them as much as how they gave us a glimpse into Gene's personal life.

Maybe you never had to deal with the electricity going out, but you have had to deal with the frustration of something going wrong and getting in the way of some plans. It just crawls under your skin that you are out of control of so many things in life. And for some reason, Gene covers that and so much more when he says "all my friends are coming over."

Really? The non-fan might ask. "That line doesn't say *anything* about any of that." It's not in *what* he says; it's in the tone and inflection of *how* he says it. I've listened to entire albums that technically said less than that one line communicated.

Sadly, that voice, that wordsmith is gone... leaving us only five albums worth of material to dig through. There is enough there in those five albums to last a lifetime, but we also wanted more. It is what it is what is. Perfecta and leaving us craving more all at the same time.

- Matt Crosslin

## IN CLOSING...

I hope that this was cool for you to read, it certainly was a great collection to put together. I wish I had been able to meet Gene, his music touched countless lives as did his friendship. There are really cool clips on the Adam Again MySpace page of Gene with Greg Lawless, as well as many of Gene's friends and band members reminiscing about him. The new Adam Again website is being worked on and will hopefully be up soon, as well as a new MySpace page for the forthcoming "Worldwide" documentary. If you don't know about "Worldwide, here's the back story, the info and the update:

It was July of 1997, with Gene's blessing and personal stamp of approval, Eden Z Films began work on a low-fi indie documentary with no budget and no real time line. Todd & Lorrie Zeller were just a couple of Adam Again fans who happened to be in the right place at the right time, and that was oddly enough, Eugene, Oregon. Zeller and Greg Lawless had become friends, as Lawless had been living in Cottage Grove, Oregon and still resides there today along with fellow artists, Richard Swift and Chris Colbert.

Gene & Greg invited Eden Z to shoot the rehearsals for Cornerstone 97 in Cottage Grove. Gene flew in from Huntington Beach and Jonny Knox flew in from Nashville. With Greg on guitar and a guest appearance from Keith Schieder on bass, the Cottage Grove Community Center had never sounded so alive as it did for a couple of long Oregon summer days as the legendary underground band Adam Again ran through some of their best songs. Many hours of Hi-8 video and B & W Super 8 Movie film was shot, then later that same summer, just after their incredible Cornerstone performance, Eden Z went to the legendary Green Room to document rough songwriting for the new Adam Again record that Gene and the band had been wanting to work on ever since *Perfecta*....

One more chance to film came in 99 when Gene decided to accompany Mike Knott on a handful of show dates. First stop was Eugene, Oregon with Gene and Greg opening the show performing "Dig" and "Stone," and Gene backing up his longtime friend Mike Knott on the Rhodes piano. Another show in Portland, Oregon was filmed, that was the last time Gene and Greg performed together as Adam Again before Gene's untimely death in 2000.

Of course with Gene's passing came the need for a different direction for the Worldwide film. Eden Z has collected around fifty interviews with Gene's friends and comrades. After a few false starts and rough cut edits, the film is still on the shelf due to lack of funding, as well as hurdles in securing licensing for Gene and Adam Again's music for the film. Since Zeller runs a full time production studio, most hours are spent on projects that pay the bills. That said, Zeller is a huge fan of Adam Again as well as all of Gene's music and side bands. This film is a near and dear labor of love. 2009 has opened up new doors of opportunity to complete the film, as well as the involvement of other artists and individuals.

Look for [www.adamagain.com](http://www.adamagain.com) to finally launch this season along with updates on the films progress. Thanks for your patience and keeping the music and memory of Gene alive. As you have read from the stories above, I'm sure he would be humbled...

[www.myspace.com/edenzfilms](http://www.myspace.com/edenzfilms)

[www.myspace.com/adamagain](http://www.myspace.com/adamagain)

[www.adamagain.com](http://www.adamagain.com) (coming soon)

"Years go by like minutes  
 You never do the things you want to do  
 Hours pass like seconds  
 You never get to where you wanted to  
 Times the ruler of the Old World  
 Today is the beginning of the end  
 If you're finally ready to, it's time to make  
 The move into the new world"

Lyrics to "In A New World Of Time"

R.I.P. Gene Eugene Andrusco  
 4-06-1961 3-20-2000



*Gene Live at Evangel Assembly of God in Williamsville, NY on April 26, 1999 by Jeremy Ladan*

**ADDRESS LABEL**